

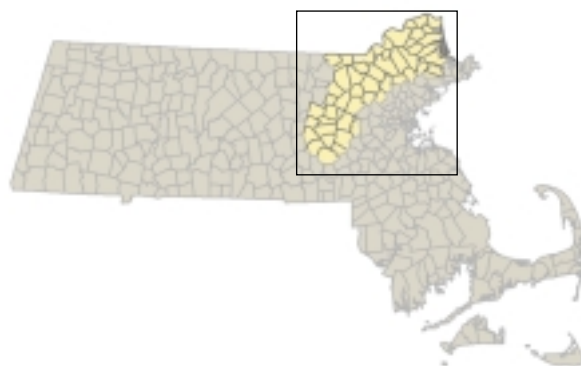
T H E GREATER MERRIMACK VALLEY & GREAT MARSH

W A T E R S H E D S

The watersheds of the six rivers that flow into the North Shore's Great Marsh (New England's largest marsh) extend far beyond the confines of the Merrimack River, as the Sudbury, Concord, Assabet, and Shawsheen Rivers flow into the Merrimack and out to sea. This chapter also includes the Ipswich River and the Parker River Watersheds, which join the Merrimack as the three rivers that flow into the Great Marsh.

The \$10 million spent by EOEA agencies has protected nearly 4,000 acres, an indication that the fast-paced growth in the Interstate 495 corridor and near the Great Marsh is making land increasingly expensive. Land conservation in this region increasingly relies on towns, land trusts, and the state to work together in developing partnerships. In addition to the acquisitions highlighted in this chapter, recent acquisitions adjacent to Willowdale State Park and along the Great Marsh demonstrate that this approach works.

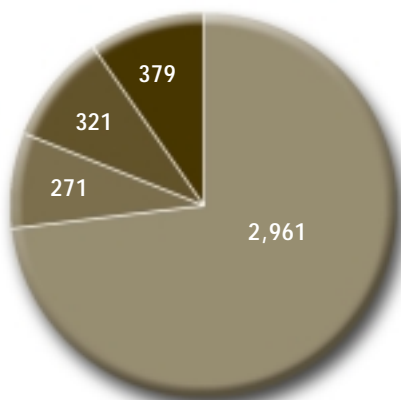
EOEA has chosen to concentrate a portion of its land protection efforts within the 155,000-acre watershed of the Great Marsh and Lower Merrimack. Currently, only 24% of the region is protected. EOEA is working with a collaboration of non-profits including the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Essex County Greenbelt Association, and TTOR to complete landscape-scale projects within the area. This group seeks to protect a block of important farm and watershed land along the Great



Marsh, which contains large amounts of unfragmented open space connected to the coast. EOEA is also working with Sudbury Valley Trustees in the upper parts of this watershed where they, working with local communities, have identified specific blocks of open land that represent the last unfragmented habitat for several unique collections of species. To be effective at keeping these landscapes unfragmented by development, a strong partnership of municipal, non-profits, federal, and EOEA agencies must continue to work closely together.

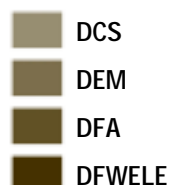
Greater Merrimack Valley and Great Marsh Land Protection Summary

A C R E S



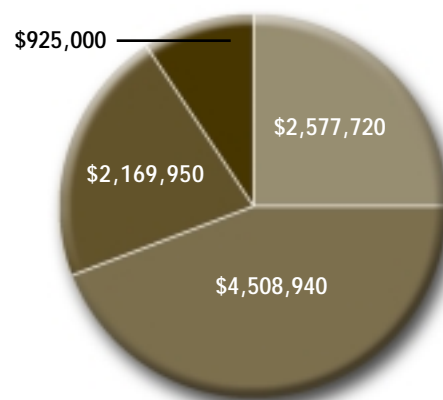
Total Acres: 3,932

A G E N C Y



Total Projects: 135

S T A T E F U N D S



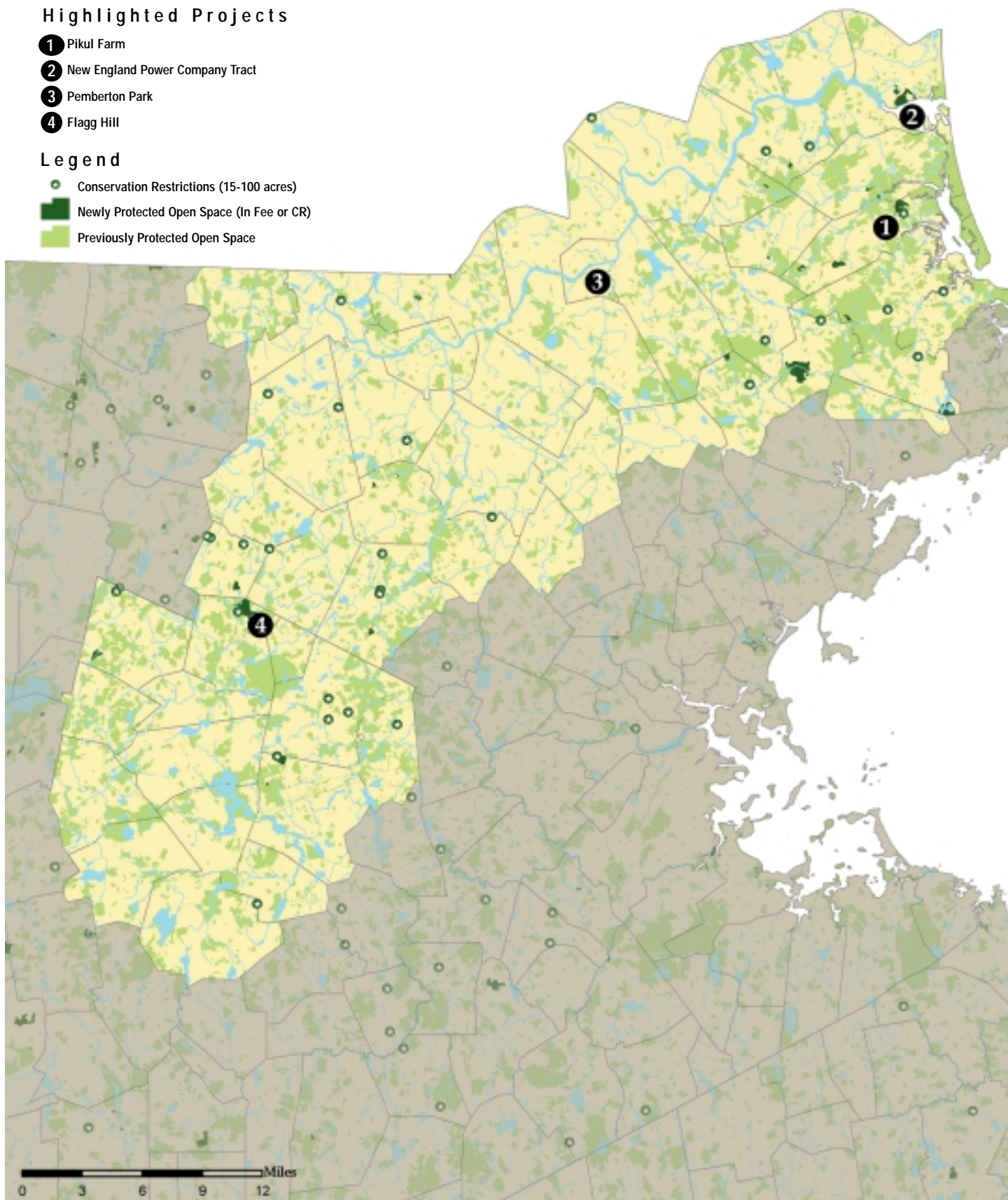
Total Funds: \$10,181,610

Highlighted Projects

- ① Pikul Farm
- ② New England Power Company Tract
- ③ Pemberton Park
- ④ Flagg Hill

Legend

- Conservation Restrictions (15-100 acres)
- Newly Protected Open Space (In Fee or CR)
- Previously Protected Open Space



PIKUL FARM

DFA/DEM • Rowley • 148 acres • APR/CR • \$1,000,000

On July 20, 2001, DEM, in conjunction with DFA and the Town of Rowley, acquired an APR/CR on 148 acres of land in Rowley from Stanley J. Pikul. This property was one of the very few remaining working dairy farms in Essex County. The farm is adjacent to hundreds of acres of protected land largely within the Parker River/Essex Bay Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

DEM, DFA, and the Town of Rowley, contributing \$200,000, \$800,000, and \$150,000 respectively, jointly hold this APR/CR. In addition, the Massachusetts Audubon Society and the Essex County Greenbelt Association each contributed \$50,000 toward the purchase price. The Essex County Greenbelt Association continues to work with the Pikul family to protect an additional 6-acre parcel.



NEW ENGLAND POWER COMPANY TRACT

DFWELE • Salisbury • 306 acres • Fee • \$650,000

DFWELE acquired this 306-acre parcel of salt marsh and associated uplands from the New England Power Company (NEPCO) in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through a National Coastal Wetlands grant. This tract, which contains nearly one mile of frontage on the Merrimack River, was the largest remaining unprotected parcel in the expansive Salisbury salt marsh. The marsh and tidal flats serve as important migrating, wintering, and nesting habitat for a wide variety of birds and provide critical habitat for anadromous fish species such as herring, alewife, shad, and salmon. This acquisition, when combined with nearby existing protected land, creates an area of over 1,000 acres of protected open space. This acquisition will also add to the protection of adjacent shellfish beds that are currently being restored, and that DFWELE hopes can be re-opened soon.

While much of the property could not be developed and was already protected by federal and state wetland protection laws, NEPCO chose to divest itself of this asset in such a way as to guarantee its current status as open land, rather than selling it to another regional or national energy producer. DFWELE considered this acquisition one of its most important in 2001 because of the large tracts of coastal habitat that support a variety of rare plant and animal species are very difficult to acquire. The NEPCO property represented a unique opportunity to protect large coastal acreage and rare habitat at a reasonable cost.



PEMBERTON PARK

DEM • Lawrence • 5 acres • Fee • \$126,400

In July, 2001, DEM acquired five parcels of land bordering the Merrimack River in Lawrence, doubling the size of the city's waterfront park. DEM also provided \$2.25 million in state funding for the development of the park, including site cleanup and restoration, trails, lighting, and gazebos. This acquisition had been proposed in the City of Lawrence's master plans for two decades. The parcels will be developed into a passive park, extending Pemberton Park to the Great Stone Dam, and will link with DEM's Lawrence Heritage State Park. When the Pemberton Park extension is finished, it will provide the public with increased access to the Merrimack River in the heart of the downtown area in Lawrence, and represents one of DEM's most important urban open space acquisitions in many years. DEM purchased the property from Family Service, Inc., Canal Street Realty Trust, and M. Vaccari. The Essex Company, a subsidiary of CHI Energy, Inc., donated its property at no cost for the benefit of the project.





FLAGG HILL

DCS • Stow • 242 acres • Grant

\$250,000 DCS, \$2,000,000 total cost

The Town of Stow had been working cooperatively with the Towns of Boxborough and Acton, the Sudbury Valley Trustees, and the Stow Conservation Trust to acquire and protect several properties along the Heath Hen Meadow Brook and its tributaries. In 2000, Stow received a \$250,000 Self-Help grant toward the acquisition of one of these parcels. The 242-acre Flagg Hill tract was part of a larger 500-acre contiguous parcel of protected land, and brought the total number of protected acres in the area to 900.

The Flagg Hill project was attractive to the Self-Help Program primarily for its natural resource values. Flagg Hill is home to a diversity of habitat types including upland and lowland forests, wetlands, vernal pools, open meadows, and agricultural lands. It also contains two archaeological sites identified by the Massachusetts Historical Society. The Sudbury Valley Trustees documented goshawks, neotropical songbirds, moose, coyote, fox, bobcat, fisher, mink, otter, beaver, and deer on the property, and noted few invasive plant species on the site.

